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UNCCD NATIONAL REPORTS HELP GUIDE

A guide to assist UNCCD Parties in preparing
their first national reports on the implementation of the
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

This help guide was prepared by the CCD secretariat with the assistance of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel (OSS) and with contributions from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and experts from the African subregional organizations, the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. This help guide is designed to provide UNCCD Parties and their national focal points, who will coordinate the preparation of the first national reports on the Convention, with useful information to assist them in the collection, compilation, analysis and presentation of data and information to be incorporated in communications on measures taken for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (article 26).

2. The guide comprises into two sections. The **first section**, the **introduction**, provides background information and explains the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation of the Convention. The **second section**, the **proposed methodology**, outlines and explains the specific guidelines provided by decision 11/COP.1 on the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation. The text of the decision is reproduced in annex I to this document. Additional guidance is provided by decision 5/COP.2, which is also contained in annex I.

3. This help guide does not constitute an obligation nor a formal requirement but a support to focal points and others involved in the preparation of the national reports.

4. National reports are to be communicated through the UNCCD secretariat for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its Third session (COP 3, Recife, Brazil, 15-26 November 1999). For COP 3, only affected African Parties are required to present their reports, according to decisions 11/COP.1 and 5/COP.2. Affected Parties from other regions are to present their reports to COP 4 in 2000. A summary of the process and work plan leading to COP 3 is contained in annex II.

5. The help guide is expected to be adapted by the national coordinating bodies to the particularities and requirements of each national context. It could also serve as a tool for monitoring and evaluating progress made in combating land degradation with a view to ensuring sustainable development.

6. Additional feedback is expected from national and subregional experts at national and subregional consultations. Following this first process of preparation of national reports and further to discussions at COP 3, a revised help guide and further recommendations should be formulated with the purpose of improving the quality of the next national reports, i.e., for COP 4 and beyond, in particular those of Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean for COP 4 and Africa again for COP 5.

A. Purpose of formulation of national reports

7. The main purpose of the national reports is to inform the Parties to the Convention on the situation of each country Party with regard to measures taken for the implementation of the UNCCD at national level. Additional specific objectives are contained in decision 11/COP.1, paragraph 2 (see annex I).

8. The information provided in the reports, together with that provided in the subregional, regional and other reports, should enable the Conference of the Parties to review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge (UNCCD, article 22, paragraph 2(a)).

9. In addition to presenting information on measures taken, national reports are expected to provide mainly an assessment of the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the Convention and to enable the COP to make appropriate recommendations to further those objectives.

10. The formulation of national reports is part of the process of implementing the Convention. Thus, while indicating the status of the UNCCD process, the reports should also help to strengthen the institutional and human capacities of national focal points to improve their ability to coordinate and motivate the further steps required for the effective implementation of the UNCCD in the perspective of gradually achieving sustainable development.

11. Given that most African Parties are already engaged in the process of preparating and implementing national action programmes (NAPs), the formulation of the national report should mainly reflect such process. It should involve those persons and organizations participating in the NAP process under the coordination of the national coordinating body (NCB)1/.

12. National reports should aim at highlighting the achievements obtained as well as the difficulties encountered in implementing the Convention for the benefit of all relevant actors and stakeholders in the NAP process.

13. As the main purpose of the national report is to describe, in a concise and comparable manner, progress in the implementation of the Convention, the most relevant information is on policy measures and institutional development. However, national reports can also serve as a means of providing information on technical or more specific matters.

1/ The national coordinating body is the government ministry or agency designated to coordinate the work of the UNCCD at the national level and the national focal point (NFP) is the contact person for the UNCCD within the NCB.

14. Reporting at the subregional level by the subregional organizations is expected to focus on measures and significant development in the formulation of the subregional action programmes (SRAPs). Countries should include in their national reports a description of the advantages and difficulties of participating in the subregional programmes. Subregional organizations are expected to inform the Parties in a complementary manner on the development of the subregional action programmes in their entirety, describing also the achievements and obstacles encountered.

B. Suggested process, to be adapted as needed to each national context

15. An essential component of national report preparation is its participatory and integrated approach. The report therefore needs to reflect the views of a wider set of actors or stakeholders and, in particular, those of relevant ministries and public agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), academic institutions, the private sector, regional and local authorities and the media, both general and specialized.

16. The national reports are expected to be the result of the participation and contributions of representatives of:

(i) Institutional or social categories, in particular, NGOs, CBOs, academic and technical institutions, the private sector, local authorities and the media;

(ii) Other public policy and planning processes in areas such as agriculture, energy, environment, education, health, trade, poverty reduction, migrations, biodiversity, climate change, forests, marine resources and coastal management, water supply, and national development planning.

17. Owing to the short time available, however, it will be necessary for at least a minimum number of representatives designated by each institutional or social category to participate in the process. National focal points could encourage additional and parallel consultations within each category, to ensure greater participation in the NAP process in the longer term perspective.

18. The following schedule is proposed as a tentative process for the consultations and formulation of the national reports, in keeping with the guidance provided by the COP and the participatory approach and principles of the UNCCD, and with the time-frame available:

(i) **First week of April**: a first meeting of the drafting group followed by a meeting of the national steering committee with approximately 15-20 persons (depending on each national setting), representing each a group or category of actors (other relevant ministries and government agencies, CBOs, NGOs, academic institutions, local

authorities, the private sector and the media). Participants should be selected according to their active involvement in the NAP process. The meeting of the national steering committee, of no more than two days, should address, among other things, the general outline of the national report and contents of its chapters, form drafting teams for each chapter, designate the person responsible for each chapter, and set up a work plan and timetable;

(ii) **Second and third week of April:** work by each group under the coordination of the national focal point assisted, if appropriate, by experts or consultants;

(iii) **End of the third week of April**: a meeting of the national steering committee of one day with coordinators responsible for each chapter to check progress and provide guidance and support as necessary;

(iv) **Fourth week of April and first week of May**: work continues by each group under coordination of national focal point assisted if appropriate, by experts or consultants;

(v) **End of the first week of May**: a second national workshop of one day with the same participants as in the first, with the purpose of presenting each chapter, discussing, and making modifications as necessary, with the support of all the participants;

(vi) **Second week of May**: work by groups to complete each chapter and pass them on to the national focal point to format and finalize the report;

(vii) **15 May**: national focal points send the reports to the CCD secretariat and relevant subregional organizations, to reach them by the end of May;

(viii) **First and second weeks of June**: subregional organizations finalize their subregional reports as appropriate on activities at their level.

C. Assistance by subregional organizations

19. Affected African country Parties can benefit from the experience and resources of the relevant subregional organizations (CILSS, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), IGAD, SADC, AMU). National focal points are therefore encouraged to coordinate the preparation of the national report with the subregional organizations.

20. In the context of the present exercise, the subregional organizations in close coordination with the CCD secretariat will provide, if needed and requested, assistance to the national focal points, within the resources available.

21. The consultants provided by the subregional organizations for this initial exercise will, if needed and requested, assist national focal points in the process of information collection, consultations and mobilization of relevant actors to participate in the formulation of national reports.

22. In providing assistance and advice to national focal points, subregional organizations should utilize, through consultancy services, the experience gained and expertise developed by countries in the region that are more advanced in the process. Subregional organizations should coordinate and integrate these resources as appropriate upon the request of their member States.

D. Synergy with other similar processes

23. In the preparation of national reports, the national focal points should utilize, as appropriate, the experience gained and data collected by other similar reporting processes and, in particular, those under the conventions on climate change and biodiversity, national environmental action plans and national Agenda 21, with the purpose of avoiding duplication of efforts, seeking synergies, improving management of information and ensuring integrated policy-making with a view to attaining sustainable development. This will also be helpful for other processes such as the formulation of project proposals for submission to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

24. Furthermore, in countries where desertification and drought are not perceived as a priority issue, advice could be provided by subregional organizations to national coordinating bodies to integrate strategies to combat land degradation into strategies on issues such as biodiversity, climate change or oceans and water management, whichever is of higher priority to the country. Subregional organizations can benefit from the experience of other convention secretariats, UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank, GEF and UNITAR on synergy and linkages among these subjects.

E. Submission modalities

25. Parties are required to communicate their reports in one of the official languages of the COP. Parties are also encouraged to submit their report, or at least a summary of it, in English, which would allow for wider dissemination of the information.

26. The guidelines in decision 11/COP.1 state that reports should be as concise as possible to facilitate their review. They do not, however, stipulate a precise length. In this regard and subject to particular national requirements as well as discussions at the subregional briefing sessions, it is recommended that reports

remain within a length of 30 pages, including the 6 pages required for the summary. Parties are also encouraged to include in the report, references to other policy or technical documentation containing additional relevant information.

27. The report should be submitted as a single document in a hard copy and an electronic copy. The electronic copy can be provided on diskette, CD-ROM, or a Web site or sent by email. Although not a requirement, it is recommended that reports are produced in either WordPerfect 5.2 or above, or MS Word 6 or above, in order to facilitate compilation and synthesis by the CCD secretariat.

28. Reports are expected to arrive in the CCD secretariat in Bonn by Monday 31 May 1999, the address being as follows:

CCD Secretariat
Post Office Box 260129
Haus Carstanjen
D-53153 Bonn, Germany
Fax: (49-228) 815.2899
E-mail: secretariat@unccd.de

II. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A. How to work with the proposed methodology

29. The methodology proposed for the national reports follows and adapts the matrix proposed by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) for indicators to monitor the UNCCD implementation process (contained in document A/AC.241/INF.4 and complemented by ICCD/COP(1)/CST/3/Add.1 and ICCD/COP(2)/CST/3/Add.1)[2/].

30. Being a first experience, it is likely - and even desirable - that new questions as well as proposals for modification of existing questions, will be raised during the process of preparation of national reports. The methodology proposed should therefore not limit the responses to the questions provided but rather serve as an orientation to respond to the main purpose of the national report as stated above in the introduction and described in detail in decision 11/COP.1 (annex I).

31. The next section will review items (a)(i) to (a)(ix) of the guidelines annexed to decision 11/COP.1, by means of four columns containing: **indicators**, **evaluation parameters**, **remarks** and **questions** on the items.

2/ Additional information is contained in the OSS/CILSS/ECOWAS report to the COP 2: "CCD's Implementation Indicators Grid - A NAP Consolidation Tool", Paris, Ouagadougou, November 1998.

B. Detailed guidelines based on the format provided by the Conference of the Parties (decision 11/COP.1)

Item (i): *A table of contents*

	RECOMMENDATIONS
Table of contents	The table of contents should not only reflect the items listed in decision 11/COP.1 but also provide the breakdown of the different sections and subsections of the national report. It should also list as annexes any additional materials presented with the report.

Item (ii): *A summary not exceeding six pages*

	RECOMMENDATIONS
Summary of the national report	The summary should not exceed six pages. It should highlight the major elements of the report and provide an easy grasp of the status of implementation of the Convention in the country. It may include, although not necessarily, some of the information prepared for the national profile database (see annex III).

Item (iii): *The strategies and priorities established within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies*

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
National plans and strategies available in other social and economic areas **National plans and strategies in the field of combating desertifi-cation developed prior to the UNCCD**	National development plan National environmental action plan or strategy National and local Agendas 21 National conservation strategy Other relevant plans or strategies (agriculture, energy, education, trade, health, poverty eradication, migrations, forests, climate change, biodiversity, coastal and marine resources, etc)	The purpose here is only to provide basic information on the existence of plans and strategies in other areas which are relevant to combating desertification The specific integration or linkages of the NAP with these other plans or strategies is to be assessed below under item (iv) on institutional measures taken to implement the Convention Additionally, it would be useful to provide basic information on previous plans or strategies in the field of desertification, in particular, those stemming from the United Nations Conference on Desertification, Nairobi, 1977.	• What are the plans and strategies available on areas relevant to combating desertification? • What is their status? Are they formulated? Are they being implemented? Since when have they been operational? • For sectoral plans and strategies, what is the priority allocated to each within the national development plan • Do these plans and strategies have any reference to combating desertification or connection to the CCD/NAP? • Have specific plans or strategies been developed in the past to address desertification?

Item (iv): *Institutional measures taken to implement the Convention*

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Established and functional national coordination body (NCB)	Legal status	The status of the NCB gives an indication of its institutional capability and of the latitude to act granted to it by the State, as shown through its establishment documents, (choice of) supervisory government service, attributions, autonomy, etc.; also the capacity of each NCB member to feed back to his or her organization and back to the NCB the relevant information. The NCB may have been established in different legal forms, including existing coordinating mechanisms (e.g., national councils for environment or sustainable development). The purpose is to show how the NCB ensures the implementation of measures listed in article 9 of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa on the preparation of NAPs and implementation and evaluation indicators.	• What is the juridical personality of the NCB? • What is its legal capacity? • Does it have financial autonomy? • What are its functions and mandate? • What is its institutional framework?
	Intersectoral and multidisciplinary characters	The intersectoral and multidisciplinary character should be reflected, within the NCB, by the presence of senior staff from various sectors of activity, staff that has complementary training and experience in various socio-economic fields and in natural resource management.	• What are the social and economic sectors that are relevant to combating land degradation represented in the NCB? • What are the other institutional or social categories represented? • What are the ways and means of communication or networking among members of the NCB and the groups they represent?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
	Composition and mode of operation	The last parameter should describe how the various actors participate in the work of the NCB, in particular NGOs and the representatives of the local populations.	With regard to consultations: • What is the mode of nomination of members of the NCB? • What is the composition of the NCB, what the ratio of Government/civil society and men/women among participants? • What is the frequency of meetings of the NCB? With regard to functioning: • Is there a work plan and timetable for the activities? • Is there a budget for the functioning of the NCB? • What are the mechanisms for supervision, control and evaluation of the work of the NCB
	Status of information and data	Databases, access to Internet, Web site, information networking (internal and external) Responses here must be coordinated with those given under item (ix) on benchmarks and indicators	• What are the information system capacities of the NCB? • What specific databases are being maintained by the NCB? • What other databases exist in the country which are relevant to desertification? • What information exchange activities in support of the NAP are carried out by the NCB, internally and externally?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Institutional framework for coherent and functional desertification control	Measures adopted to adjust or strengthen the institutional framework	The analysis of existing mechanisms for coordinating and harmonizing desertification control actions (at the local and the national level) should give due heed to the lessons of past experience. This analysis should lead to measures to readjust, adapt, and strengthen existing mechanisms, in particular to ensure the participation of local actors	• Have the mechanisms available for coordination and harmonization of actions to combat land degradation at national and local levels, been reviewed or analysed? • Has the review led to any proposals or new political, institutional or organizational measures? • What are the measures taken to make the above measures sustainable and effective?
	Measures adopted to strengthen existing institutions at the local and at the national level	This involves various actions in capacity building that are to be implemented in the short and medium term.	• Has capacity and institution building been addressed and promoted? • How have these measures facilitated the implementation of the NAP and made its structures operational?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
NAPs as part of the national economic and social development plan	Making the NAP coherent with other environmental strategic and planning frameworks	Explain whether a concerted analysis has been made of existing plans. This is to include making international partners' strategies coherent at the national level. How are the UNCCD principles accommodated in other environmental frameworks (participation, partnership, programme approach, etc.)? Special mention is needed of linkages with structural adjustment plans in those countries where such plans are being implemented	• Has a concerted analysis been made of the existing plans & strategies that are relevant to combating land degradation with the purpose of ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication or scattered efforts? • Is the NAP fully considered as a strategic framework for action in the larger development plan? • What have been the proposals for seeking and developing synergies and complementary approaches? • How are the UNCCD principles acknowledged and integrated in other environmental and development plans (participation, partnerships, programme approach...)? • What proposals exist concerning synergy, complementarity, etc.?
	Linkages of NAP with national, intra-regional and local approaches	Explain whether the NAP has been incorporated at all levels of the national economic and social development plan	• Is the NAP clearly and visibly integrated into the process of national economic and social development planning, including at the local and national levels?
	Linkages of NAP with subregional and regional action programmes (SRAP and RAP)		• Have the articulations between the NAP and the SRAP and RAP been clearly identified? • What are the actions or activities in the NAP that have a subregional or regional projection or dimension?
	Government's agreement		• Has the government officially adopted the NAP? • Has a priority been given officially to the NAP in the budget and financing to implement the national development plan?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Coherent and functional legal and regulatory framework	Assessment of the analysis of the legislation on environment and related fields	The cross-analysis of environmental and other relevant legislation should, in particular, lead to proposals that imply greater responsibility for local populations and more solid guarantees concerning land tenure.	• Has a study or analysis been made of existing legislation? • What have been the legislative measures aimed at developing and ensuring greater involvement and responsibility of local populations? • Have measures been taken to raise awareness, inform and educate local populations to enhance their participation?
	Measures to adapt current legislation or introduce new enactments: • Land tenure reform • Decentralization • Natural resource management (forestry code, pastoral code, etc)	All the measures should be supported by efforts to provide information on national orientations and the contents of laws and regulations to the grassroots level in order to enrol greater participation by the local populations.	• Have measures taken ensured a real capacity and empowerment of local populations and local authorities to participate in decision-making that is relevant to combating land degradation? • What has been the procedure to identify and implement such measures?

Item (v): *Participatory process in support of the preparation and implementation of the action programme*

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Effective participation of actors involved in defining NAP priorities	Methods of participation of various actors (regular consultations or meetings and regular exchange of information -mail or email networks) Gender balance of actors involved in defining NAP priorities	This entails verification of the extent of involvement of relevant actors in defining national priorities: local authorities, community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, private business, and academic institutions, including young people and women as actors who are especially targeted by the Convention. Providing relevant actors with accurate and timely information, in particular as concerns the UNCCD interests and selected national options, is an essential factor in their full participation in decision-making.	• Does a strategy of communication and public awareness exist? • If so, is it being implemented? If not, how have the awareness campaigns been organized? • How have the messages and contents, as well as the media chosen, for such campaigns been determined? • Have all the relevant social and institutional categories benefited from the awareness campaigns? • Have the relevant information documents about the UNCCD been translated and made available to the local populations in their own languages? • What is the gender balance in the NAP steering committee, national coordinating body and national NGO coordinating body? • Has there been gender awareness training for the NAP steering committee, NCB, NCCD? • Has the government implemented policies on gender? • What approaches were used to ensure women's participation in the NAP process? • Number and percentage of women involved at various levels of the process (e.g., national steering committee) • What measures and approaches are still required for addressing any existing gaps in relation to gender mainstreaming in the NAP? • What are the activities targeting specific categories such as women, youth, the private sector, scientific and academic circles, and the media?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
	Representativeness of various actors in the national priorities identification processes (local forums, national forum)		• What is the nature of the various intermediaries (consultants, NGOs, government agencies, etc.) that have facilitated the awareness process? • Have they been prepared for those functions and tasks? • What consultative processes have been undertaken with each category of actors or stakeholders and how decentralized have they been? • Has a mechanism been put in place to ensure continuous consultations?
	Nature and scope of information, education, and communication actions		• What are the systems for exchange, circulation and transfer of information? • What are the mechanisms adopted to ensure that the various categories of actors are involved in the process to provide information as well as to benefit from the consultations' results?
	Extent of uptake: • of local concerns at the national level, • of results of national consultations at the local level		• What is the mode of designation of the representatives of various social and institutional categories, at both national and local levels, (nomination, election, etc.)? • What are the relationships among the various actors involved in the local and national consultative processes? • What local and traditional knowledge has been incorporated into the NAP?

Item (vi): *Consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the national action programme and the partnership agreement with the developed country Parties and other interested entities*

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Effective support from international partners for cooperation	Degree of participation of international partners and level (percentage) of responses in relation to needs expressed	International partners include: bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, and other subregional, regional and international organizations Commitments by international partners should lead to their participation in local and national consultations and their financial support for the process Consultations among partner countries should be organized *inter alia* by the appointment of a lead country to serve as facilitator.	• What are the measures taken by government to ensure the involvement of international partners in the process? • Have these partners participated in all stages of the process? • What have the partners done to be present and active? • What has been the follow-up by the government?
		Establishment of an informal consultation and harmonization process for actions between partner countries.	• Is there a consultative mechanism established among partners at the national or local levels? • What are the mechanisms to communicate information among them and with the NCB? • What is the frequency of meetings, the number of participants and the level of participation? • What is the distribution of roles and tasks among the various partners?

Item (vii): *Measures taken or planned within the framework of the national action programmes, including measures to improve the economic environment, to conserve natural resources, to improve institutional organization, to improve knowledge of desertification and to monitor and assess the effects of drought*

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Adequate diagnosis of past experience	Synthesis and evaluation of activities undertaken in the field of combating desertification and mitigating drought	Diagnosis must indicate the state of natural resources and extent of desertification at the moment of initiating the NAP	• Has an exhaustive diagnosis been made of past experience? If so, how and by whom? • Please describe the consultations undertaken and participatory approach developed? • Has such a diagnosis provided a sound basis for the NAP process? • Has the diagnosis resulted in specific recommendations for the formulation of the NAP?
Established technical programmes and functional integrated projects to combat desertification	Inventory, adaptation and integration of projects under way within the NAP process	Projects underway in resource management and desertification control should be analysed in relation to the CCD principles and, if necessary, adjusted accordingly. This should be a gradual action geared to the medium term. Well-adapted training, and scientific-technical programmes should be designed	• Have ongoing projects involving natural resource management and in particular, combating desertification, been reviewed to assess their conformity with the UNCCD principles? If so, by whom? • What are the proposals to integrate the ongoing projects into the NAP process? • What are the steps taken to ensure adaptation of ongoing projects and their integration into the NAP process? • Have projects specifically recommended by the NAP been implemented, and what is their status, results and impacts?
	Identification of new actions and planned measures		• What are the new actions proposed to combat desertification? • What are the planned measures?
	Specific actions to strengthen the national capacity to combat desertification, in particular at the local level	Under this item, specific responses on training and capacity-building processes are expected. Information on other institutional measures is to be provided above under item (iv) on the institutional measures taken to implement the Convention	• Have specific training as well as technical and scientific programmes been formulated and adopted? • Has a priority been given to strengthen capacities for the local level? • If so, how, and which training activities have been organized (courses, seminars, workshops, in-service training, etc)? • Has there been an evaluation of the training?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Action programme implemented in compliance with priority fields set out in the Convention	• Measures for natural resource conservation. • Measures to improve institutional organization. • Measures to increase knowledge of desertification as a phenomenon. • Monitoring and evaluation measures for the effects of desertification. • Measures to improve the economic environment.	The contents of the various provisions stem from the contents of the action programme adopted by each of the affected countries and the priorities set by them. Article 8 of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa gives an example of the contents that might be included in the measures to be adopted Additional information on these measures can be provided in responses to the questions under previous indicators. On institutional measures, in particular, responses can be concentrated under item (iv) on the institutional measures taken to implement the Convention	• Have measures been identified and taken to improve the economic environment, such as those proposed in article 8 of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa? • If so, how are they integrated into the other economic policies and plans (agriculture, trade, poverty eradication, energy, financial instruments, migration, etc)?
Linkage achieved with subregional and regional action programmes	• Development, at the national level, of programmes of a subregional or regional character • Strengthening the African and other relevant scientific networks	The desertification control programmes adopted at the subregional level should be incorporated into the national programmes SRAPs and RAPs are understood to be complementary to and supportive of national action programmes The contribution of the scientific networks can be measured by weighing the relationship between the national actors and the relevant networks	• How have the actions and measures taken at the subregional and regional levels been integrated into national policies and the NAP and vice versa? • Are national scientific and technical institutions participating actively and effectively in the subregional, regional and international relevant networks?
Effectiveness of measures in local capacity-building	• Degree of responsibility in natural resource management devolving on local communities • Degree of decentralization or deconcentration achieved • Involvement of actors in monitoring and evaluation process	The degree of power which governments delegate to local actors and the support measures (training, local organization, etc) need to be clearly shown Additional information on this indicator can be provided in responses to the questions under previous indicators, in particular, under item (iv) on the institutional measures taken to implement the Convention	

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Partnership agreements applied	• Functioning of internal partnership agreements • Consultation and coordination process • Resources made available for NAP implementation • Number of international partners involved (multilateral and bilateral)	Information on this indicator and parameters can be found in responses above to item (iv) on the institutional measures taken to implement the Convention and item (vi) on the consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the NAP and the partnership agreement with the developed country Parties and other interested entities	

Item (viii): ***Financial allocations from national budgets in support of implementation as well as financial assistance and technical cooperation received and needed, identifying and prioritizing requirements***

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Adopted financial mechanisms	Measures to facilitate the access of local actors to existing sources of funding.	Revision of existing financial mechanisms should make finance-related tools more accessible to local actors.	• What measures have been taken to ensure access by local actors to funding sources? • Are these measures provisional or permanent? How can they be made sustainable? • Is there a listing of existing sources of funding?
	Working out new, adapted methods to mobilize internal and external resources.	New forms of financing could comprise national desertification funds, including the promotion of funds at the local level. Within this frame, the State should define the terms and conditions for participation by various actors in the financing and management of desertification control activities. The international partners should support this process conceptually and financially.	• Has government determined specific mechanisms to ensure financing for combating desertification? • What are the modalities of participation of the various actors in the funding and management of activities to combat desertification? • Are international partners supporting somehow these specific financial mechanisms?
NAP financing	• Mobilization of national resources. • Mobilization of external resources • Contribution from Global Mechanism • Number of partners providing financial support • Amount of financial resources available	Mobilization of internal resources indicates the degree of priority attached to desertification control by the State in the framework of the action programme Mobilization of external resources can show the degree of commitment of partners in cooperation to the national process The contribution of the Global Mechanism (where applicable, as it has only recently been implemented), should be evaluated through its capacity to mobilize new resources, to direct the countries concerned towards existing financial resources, and to identify financial mechanisms that might help to implement the Convention.	• What actions have been taken to mobilize resources at national and international levels? • Has the Global Mechanism been contacted? Has it been able to provide orientation and support? • How many partners, and which, specifically support the NAP process? • How much have these partners provided to the NAP process and how much has the government requested them to provide?

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Technical cooperation developed	• Mobilization of technical cooperation • Identification of priority needs in technical assistance		• Has a plan been formulated for the request of technical cooperation, including multilateral and bilateral cooperation? • What technical cooperation support has been received other than financial resources? • What are the needs for technical cooperation, in what specific areas (technical, scientific, NGOs, CBOs, etc.) and which is the priority order?

Item (ix): *Review of the benchmarks and indicators utilized to measure progress and an assessment thereof*

Indicators	Evaluation parameters	Remarks	Questions
Operational mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation	Establishment and/or strengthening of national environmental monitoring and observation capacities. Information system on desertification at the national level Main actors' access to available information Mechanisms for consultation concerning the analysis of results Regular production of reports Participation of scientific and technical institutions in monitoring and evaluation Feedback on evaluation for programme management	Affected countries should have the national capacity to harness the relevant environmental information, including: • The capacity to collect, analyse and process information, and to produce impact indicators • The functional efficiency for disseminating information and networking at the national level • The capacity to harmonize existing information systems in related fields (environment, agriculture, energy, climate change, biodiversity, coastal and marine resource management, etc.) • The capacity to monitor the impact of the NAP Response to this indicator and parameters can refer to the information provided on the same subject under item (iv) on the institutional measures taken to implement the Convention.	• What is the mechanism of observation and monitoring of the environment? • What are the measures taken for harmonization of existing mechanisms and systems? • What is the planned national methodology for the elaboration of impact indicators? Has it been adopted?

C. UNCCD profile system for national reports

32. In addition to what is requested by decision 11/COP.1, the national focal points are recommended to integrate the information and data collected for the national reports into specific databases, which could become information tools for improving policy and management of land degradation issues, utilizing available national systems such as the desertification information systems (DIS) and environmental information systems (EIS).

33. Database development should in particular include institutional and expertise data such as relevant organizations and institutions, experts, projects and technical documentation. These databases, as well as systems such as the DIS and EIS that have been developed in some countries as part of the NAP process, should be fully utilized to facilitate the preparation of future national reports.

34. The information obtained by the CCD secretariat from the national reports as well as from their compilation and synthesis would be organized in a UNCCD profile system for national reports, with the purpose of facilitating interaction and exchange of information among all relevant actors, at both national and international levels, to support the implementation of the NAPs, formulate more accurate and useful reports and facilitate the compilation and synthesis of future reports (format contained in annex III).

35. Some of the elements requested in annex III for the national profile on UNCCD could be utilized for the summary of the national report. However, additional information on items other than those requested in annex III would also be needed.

Annex I

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

A. Decision 11/COP.1[3]/

Procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 26 of the Convention, which provides that each Party shall communicate to the Conference of the Parties at its ordinary sessions, through the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention, reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention and that the Conference of the Parties shall determine the timetable for submission and the format of such reports,

Recalling also article 22, paragraph 2 (a) of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge,

Recalling further article 22, paragraph 2 (b) of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall promote and facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties, and determine the form and timetable for transmitting the information to be submitted pursuant to article 26, review the reports and make recommendations on them,

Conscious of the desirability of adopting procedures to organize and streamline the communication of information,

Having reviewed the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on this issue,

Decides to adopt the procedures attached to the present decision.

3/ ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1, pp. 41-46.

8. Parties are encouraged to make full use of the expertise of competent intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the preparation of reports and in the dissemination of relevant information.

9. Relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, are encouraged to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention.

Format and content of reports

10. Reports should be as concise as possible to facilitate their review. They should be structured as follows, taking into account the degree of development of action programmes and other relevant circumstances:

(a) Reports on national action programmes

(i) A table of contents;
(ii) A summary not exceeding six pages;
(iii) The strategies and priorities established within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies;
(iv) The institutional measures taken to implement the Convention;
(v) The participatory process in support of the preparation and implementation of the action programme;
(vi) The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the national action programme and the partnership agreement with developed country Parties and other interested entities;
(vii) The measures taken or planned within the framework of the national action programmes, including measures to improve the economic environment, to conserve natural resources, to improve institutional organization, to improve knowledge of desertification and to monitor and assess the effects of drought;
(viii) Financial allocations from national budgets in support of implementation as well as financial assistance and technical cooperation received and needed, identifying and prioritizing requirements;
(ix) A review of the benchmarks and indicators utilized to measure progress and an assessment thereof;

(b) Reports on joint, subregional and regional action programmes

(i) A table of contents;
(ii) A summary not exceeding six pages;
(iii) The areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned;
(iv) The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the subregional or regional action programmes

and the partnership agreement with developed country Parties and other interested entities;

(v) Financial allocations by affected country Parties of the subregion or region in support of implementation as well as financial assistance and technical cooperation received and needed, identifying and prioritizing requirements;

(vi) A review of the benchmarks and indicators utilized to measure progress and an assessment thereof;

(c) Reports of developed country Parties

(i) A table of contents;

(ii) A summary not exceeding six pages;

(iii) The consultative processes and partnership agreements in which they are involved;

(iv) Measures taken to support the preparation and implementation of action programmes at all levels, including information on the financial resources they have provided, or are providing, both bilaterally and multilaterally;

(d) Reports of affected developed country Parties not preparing action programmes

(i) A table of contents;

(ii) A summary not exceeding six pages;

(iii) The strategies and priorities, within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought and any relevant information on their implementation.

11. Information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, should include summaries, in principle not exceeding four pages.

Language of reports

12. Reports shall be communicated to the Permanent Secretariat in one of the official languages of the Conference of the Parties.

Timetable for the submission of reports

13. The Conference of the Parties shall initiate, at its third session, review of the reports submitted by the Parties, alternating between affected African country Parties and affected country Parties of other regions. At its third session, the Conference of the Parties shall examine the reports of affected African country Parties. At its fourth session, the Conference of the Parties shall examine the reports of affected country Parties of other regions. Such rotation shall apply to subsequent sessions.

14. Developed country Parties shall report, at each session, on measures taken to assist action programmes of those affected developing country Parties reporting for the session. Relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, are invited to do likewise.

15. Reports shall be submitted to the Permanent Secretariat at least six months prior to the session at which they are to be reviewed.

Compilation and synthesis by the Permanent Secretariat

16. The Permanent Secretariat shall compile the summaries of reports submitted pursuant to paragraphs 3 to 7, and of information provided by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, on measures taken or planned in support of implementation of the Convention.

17. The Permanent Secretariat shall prepare, in addition, a synthesis of the reports setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention.

Review process

18. Reports by Parties, together with advice and information provided by the Committee on Science and Technology and the global mechanism consistent with their respective mandates and such other reports as the Conference of the Parties may call for, shall constitute the basis of the review of implementation by the Conference of the Parties.

Periodic reports

19. After the third ordinary session and following every subsequent ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties, the Permanent Secretariat shall prepare a report summarizing the conclusions of the review process.

Official documents

20. Documents prepared by the Permanent Secretariat in accordance with paragraphs 16, 17 and 19 shall constitute official documents of the Conference of the Parties.

Availability of reports

21. All reports communicated to the Permanent Secretariat in accordance with the present procedures, as well as institutional information pursuant to paragraph 22, shall be in the public domain. The Permanent Secretariat shall make available copies of the reports to any interested Parties and other entities or individuals.

Communication of institutional information to the Permanent Secretariat

22. To facilitate exchanges of information and informal contacts within and outside the review process, Parties shall communicate to the Permanent Secretariat, as soon as

practicable, information concerning the names, addresses and phone numbers of national, subregional, and regional focal points and coordinating bodies.

23. The Permanent Secretariat shall keep in databases and/or directories, and regularly update, information provided in accordance with the present procedures.

Assistance to developing country Parties in the preparation of reports

24. The Permanent Secretariat shall, on request and within the limits of its resources, facilitate assistance to affected developing country Parties, particularly affected African country Parties and least developed Parties among them, in the compilation and communication of information pursuant to the present procedures, or seek such assistance from bilateral donors and/or competent intergovernmental organizations.

B. Decision 5/COP.2[4]/

Procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 22, paragraphs 2(a) and (b), article 23, paragraph 2(c), and article 26 of the Convention,

Reaffirming decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation,

Having considered the review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements, including support to regional action programmes,[5]/

1. *Recalls* that, at its third session, in 1999, it shall examine the reports of affected African country Parties and, at its fourth session, in 2000, the reports of affected country Parties in other regions;

2. *Recalls also* that developed country Parties shall report, at each session, on measures taken to assist action programmes of those affected developing country Parties reporting for the session, and that relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, are invited to do likewise;

3. *Recalls further* that reports are to be submitted in conformity with the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation contained in decision 11/COP.1;

4/ ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1, p. 9.

5/ ICCD/COP(2)/5.

4. *Calls upon* Governments, the United Nations system and all other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to provide technical and financial support with a view to assisting affected African country Parties for the compilation and communication of information to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties at its third session, in 1999, for consideration, as well as identifying the technical and financial needs associated with action programmes;

5. *Requests* the secretariat to report to the Conference of the Parties at its third session on its activities related to paragraph 24 of the procedures contained in decision 11/COP.1 and article 23, paragraph 2(c), of the Convention.

12th Plenary
11 December 1998

Annex II

WORK PLAN AND TIMETABLE FOR PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS AND COMPILATION AND SYNTHESIS BEFORE THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

January: First technical meeting with international and African subregional partners to decide on a possible approach for the elaboration of the national reports (25-26 January, at CCD, Geneva)

February: Second technical meeting (22-23 February, at UNEP, Nairobi)

Contact additional international and regional partners

Preparation of guidelines by CCD secretariat and UNITAR/OSS

Recruitment of local consultants: in coordination between countries, subregional organizations and CCD secretariat

March: Briefing sessions at SADC (15-16, Johannesburg), AMU (18-19, Rabat), IGAD (18-19, Nairobi) and CILSS/ECOWAS (22-23, Ouagadougou)

April: Preparation of reports, including two national workshops with a working meeting in between and work by groups on each chapter as proposed above

Country visits as needed to provide additional assistance

May: Transmission of national reports to CCD secretariat

Finalization of subregional reports and transmission to CCD secretariat

June: Compilation and synthesis by CCD secretariat

July: Finalization and submission for translation

August: Distribution of documents for COP 3

September: Regional African Conference on the UNCCD (to prepare COP 3), Nairobi, to be jointly organized by UNEP and the CCD secretariat

November: COP 3, Recife, Brazil, 15-26 November 1999

Annex III

UNCCD PROFILE SYSTEM FOR NATIONAL REPORTS

The following information will be integrated by the CCD secretariat with the technical support of UNITAR[6]/ into a database of profiles on UNCCD national reports. The database will be maintained in close collaboration with national focal points, subregional and regional organizations with the purpose of developing, at national, subregional and regional levels, an information tool to assist policy making and management, to facilitate the preparation of future reports and to meet other networking needs at national as well as international levels.

Although the database could be expanded in the future to include additional substantive or institutional data, at this point it is necessary to concentrate on data which can be easily transmitted and integrated, given the limited resources and time available to the secretariat.

Basic data items for each national profile include:

(a) **UNCCD ratification and entry into force** (ratif/EIF): dates and declarations

(b) **UNCCD national coordinating body** (NCB): name of the organization, institutional framework, address and Web site

(c) **UNCCD national focal point** (NFP): name of person in charge, title, address, telephone, fax and email

(d) **UNCCD national events** (awareness seminars and other relevant forums for the formulation and adoption of the NAP): date, venue and report and documents available (title, date, language and where to request a copy)

(e) **UNCCD national action programme** (NAP): objectives, title of policies and measures, list of projects and activities proposed, list of multilateral and bilateral donor agencies involved

(f) **UNCCD national report**: number of report (COP 3, etc), date of submission, availability in hard copy and electronic format (CD-ROM, Web site, diskette or email) (future reports, also status of preparation of national reports)

6/ The CCD secretariat is developing a state-of-the-art information system that will deal with information in various forms, relevant to the specific needs of policy-making, programme development and implementation of the Convention. In support of the CCD information system, UNITAR will utilize the work done in collaboration with OSS and the UNEP Global Resources Information Database on the desertification information systems in several African countries.

(g) Other relevant **organizations**, classified as government or public agencies, academic institutions, NGOs, CBOs, private sector, regional and local authorities and media: starting with basic list and gradually including other data: focal points, addresses, telephone, fax, emails, Web sites, membership, etc. Indication of whether they participate in the national UNCCD committee or council.

(h) Other relevant **strategies, plans or programmes** in fields such as national development, agriculture, energy, environment, education, health, trade, poverty reduction, migrations, biodiversity, climate change, marine resources and coastal management, forests, water supply, etc. Indication of whether any of these areas have similar national reporting processes and in such cases, indication of focal point.

(i) Relevant **information systems** available in the country: basic description of system most relevant to UNCCD (for managerial and institutional as well as technical purposes), list of other national information systems with institutional/managerial and scientific/technical/geographical data and their Web sites, and participation in international information systems

(j) Relevant national **training institutions and activities** available in the country

The UNCCD national profile system will include links to the CCD database on COP participants and gradually to other databases containing relevant national data in various international organizations.